



Media Contact:
Patrick Harrison
Paradise Advertising & Marketing, Inc.
(727) 821-5155 ext. 110
Patrick@ParadiseAdv.com

**ABUNDANT WATERWAYS PRESENT DIVERSE RECREATIONAL OPTIONS
IN SEMINOLE COUNTY**

Tucked away only minutes from Orlando lies a natural alternative to a Central Florida vacation: Seminole County. Although only 344 square miles in size, Seminole County boasts some 2,000 freshwater lakes and clear running rivers that course around three sides of the county.

The scenic St. Johns River, Florida's longest navigable inland waterway with a total length of 342 miles, constitutes the eastern boundary of the county while Lake Monroe, a wide point of the river, forms the northern border. The pristine Wekiva River, fed by underground springs that pump an estimated 48 million gallons of crystal-clear, fresh water through the river daily, is located on the western boundary of Seminole County. The remainder of the region's lakes and rivers wind around the three sides of the county, most are linked with the St. Johns River, and there is an abundance of recreational options available to visitors.

The Wekiva River is one of the area's most popular attractions. A quiet retreat that flows north through a densely forested canopy, the Wekiva River is inhabited by diverse wildlife and lush semi-tropical vegetation. In fact, the native animal and plant species are so abundant in the area that the upper basin of the Wekiva has been designated by the state of Florida as an aquatic reserve, while the lower section has been designated "scenic and wild" by the Federal and state governments.

Wekiva Springs State Park is located at the headwater of the Wekiva River and is the center of activity. The 6,397-acre compound offers a full range of activities including swimming, canoe rentals, picnic areas, boardwalks, more than 13 miles of nature trails and an eight-mile horseback-riding trail. For more information on Wekiva Springs State Park, call 407-884-2008.

Following the Wekiva River to the St. Johns will lead water enthusiasts to Lake Monroe in Sanford. The sprawling, 13-square-mile waterway is famous for its world-class bass fishing. Lake Monroe has attracted a number of boat rental and houseboat cruise suppliers. Among them is Skyline Watersports at the Monroe Harbor Marina, with speedboats, pontoon boats, fishing boats and wave runners available to rent. For rental information, call 407-321-0000.

The St. Johns River Basin, also known as the Central Florida Everglades, is home to more than 200 species of exotic and native birds, manatees, alligators, owls, wild hogs, deer and more. Visitors can enjoy Southern fare cooking, such as gator, catfish, grouper, burgers and sandwiches at Gator Landing Riverside Grille. For information on the restaurant, call 407-330-1612.

Sailing from Monroe Harbor Marina, the 1940s-style Great Lakes Steamer Rivership Romance offers daily luncheon and moonlight dinner-dance cruises featuring appetizers, full-course meals, table service and live entertainment. Guests can also enjoy the cozy ambiance of the cocktail lounge or the outer decks as the ship winds along the tranquil St. Johns River. Call 1-800-423-7401 for additional information.

A different kind of water wonderland can be found just minutes away at Lake Jessup in Oviedo. Ten thousand acres large and more than 100,000 years old, Lake Jessup has the largest concentration of alligators per acre of any lake in the U.S. Those who want to view this Florida “native” up-close and personal can arrange a guided airboat ride with Bill's Airboat Adventures by calling 407-977-3214 or Gator Ventures of Seminole, 407-977-8235.

Flat-bottom airboats propel riders on an exhilarating trip over logs, sandbars and grassy marshes deep into the wild side of Florida's tributaries. Airboat tours with Black Hammock Adventures are launched at Black Hammock Fish Camp and Marina, home to Black Hammock Restaurant, which serves Florida “cracker-style” meals of catfish, frog legs or gator tail. The restaurant has been reviewed and awarded an excellent rating by *Southern Living* magazine. For information or reservations, call 407-365-1244.

Whether it's by airboat, canoe, powerboat, catamaran or seaplane, waterborne pleasures are abundant in Seminole County.

Located in the heart of Central Florida, and within a 15-minute drive from its tourist-magnet neighbor, Orlando, Seminole County offers immediate access to theme parks, exciting entertainment and thrilling nightlife. Surrounded by the beauty of natural Florida, Seminole County also offers the classic Florida experience of peaceful rivers, fishing, boating, hiking and more. And it's all within an easy drive of Florida's fabulous Treasure Coast beaches and Kennedy Space Center.

For destination information call 1-800-800-7832 (USA and Canada) or 407-665-2900 (outside the USA) or visit www.VisitSeminole.com.

###